

§102 as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,174,563 (Simpson). Claims 1-6, 8-10, 16-18 and 20 stand rejected under 35 USC §102 as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,092,193 (Brooks). Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 16-18 stand rejected under 35 USC §102 as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,397,858 (Delalle '858). Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 16-18 stand rejected under 35 USC §102 as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,397,855 (Dellale '855). Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 USC §102 as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,264,062 to Lack et al (Lack). Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-20 and allowance of claims 1-21 are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney wishes to thank Examiner Edmondson for the courtesies extended him during the telephone interview on January 18, 2002.

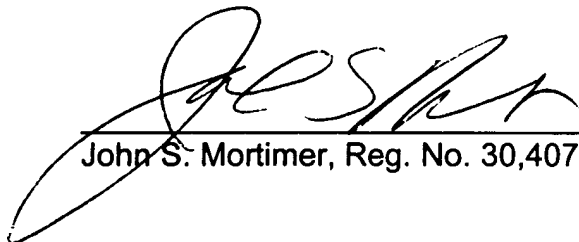
During the interview, the amendments, as now made to each of the independent claims, were discussed. It was noted that each of Simpson, Brooks, Delalle '858, Delalle '855 and Lack are directed to structures wherein the meltable material resides between the joint surfaces. Belicic does not disclose direct guiding of a meltable material against either a male or female element.

In light of the amendments, claims 1, 11 and 16 are believed allowable. The remaining claims, including new claim 21, depend from either claims 1, 11 or 16 and recite further significant limitations to further distinguish over the art.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-20 and allowance of the case are requested.

Enclosed is the extra claim fee of \$9.00. Should additional fees be required in connection with this matter, please charge our deposit account No. 23-0785.

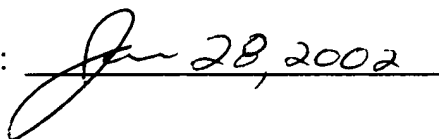
Respectfully submitted,



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MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDMENTS

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (amended) A method of forming a meltable material at a joint between telescopingly engaged male and female elements [with the female element having a joint surface that surrounds a joint surface on the male element], said method comprising the steps of:

directing the male element into the female element so that the male and female elements are telescopingly engaged and a joint surface on the female element surrounds a joint surface on the male element;

with the male and female elements telescopingly engaged, placing a ring of the meltable material around one of the male and female elements at a first location [spaced from the joint];

heating the male and female elements at the joint to a temperature at which the meltable material melts;

sliding the ring of meltable material guidingly directly against the one of the male and female elements from the first location to a second location;

with the ring of meltable material at the second location and the male and female elements at the joint at a temperature at which the meltable material melts, causing the meltable material to flow between the male and female joint surfaces; and

cooling the male and female elements at the joint to solidify the meltable material between the male and female joint surfaces.

11. (amended) A method of forming a meltable material at a joint between telescopingly engaged male and female elements [with the female element having a joint surface that surrounds a joint surface on the male element], the female element having a free edge, said method comprising the steps of:

directing the male element into the female element so that the male and female elements are telescopingly engaged and a joint surface on the female element surrounds a joint surface on the male element;

with the male and female elements telescopingly engaged, placing a ring of the meltable material around the male element [at the joint but not fully within the female element] at a first location spaced from the free edge of the female element,

sliding the meltable material guidingly directly against the male element from the first location closer to the free edge of the female element to a second location at which the ring of the meltable material is not fully within the female element;

heating the male and female elements at the joint to a temperature at which the meltable material melts;

causing the melted meltable material to flow between the male and female elements; and

cooling the male and female elements at the joint to solidify the meltable material between the male and female joint surfaces.

16. A method of making a connection between male and female elements, [with the female element having an internal joint surface and the male element having an external joint surface,] said method comprising the steps of:

directing the male element into the female element so that the male and female elements are telescopingly engaged and a joint surface on the female element surrounds a joint surface on the male element;

providing a ring of meltable material;

with the male and female elements telescopingly engaged, directing one of the male and female elements through the ring of meltable material to a first location on the one of the male and female elements;

after directing the one of the male and female elements through the ring of meltable material, directing the male element into the female element so that the female joint surface surrounds the male joint surface;

with the male element in the female element, sliding the ring of the meltable material guidingly directly against the one of the male and female elements to a second location;

heating the male and female joint surfaces to a temperature at which the meltable material melts;

causing the melted meltable material to flow between the male and female joint surfaces; and

cooling the male and female joint surfaces to solidify the meltable material between the male and female joint surfaces.

Please add new claim 21 as follows:

21. The method of making a connection between male and female elements according to claim 11 wherein in the second position, the ring of meltable material directly abuts to the free edge of the female element.